



Natural Voice Network Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

The NVN is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment for its members and associates, including practitioners, trustees, volunteers, and the wider community with whom its members engage.

- We strive to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, faith, gender, sexuality, marital status, educational background, learning ability, physical or mental health, age, class, occupation or wealth.
- We consider equality to mean breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all.
- We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences, and by respecting this, everyone can feel valued for their contributions.

The NVN recognises the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination. In following best practice we aim to go beyond legislative compliance, making equality, fairness and diversity a fundamental part of all our activities.

The NVN recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. We seek to encourage and harness these differences to help make the Network relevant, accessible and welcoming to all.

The NVN will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour. Embracing the principle of non-discrimination as set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the NVN seeks 'to guarantee that human rights are exercised without discrimination of any kind based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status such as disability, age, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic and social situation'. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [NVN Statement on Inclusivity](#).

2. Scope

This policy relates to all aspects of activity undertaken by the NVN and its members, including:

- Membership of the Network;
- Election to the Trustee Board;

- Tendering, commissioning and contracting work and services;
- Programming and event management;
- Organising choirs, workshops and other singing activities;
- Dealing with volunteers, supporters and other associated third parties.

3. NVN Community

(members, trustees, volunteers, freelance personnel)

The NVN will treat all members, volunteers and contractors equally and fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against them.

The NVN recognises the benefits of having a diverse membership and will take steps to ensure that:

- Membership is relevant and accessible to the widest pool of practitioners practicable.
- Where possible, positive action measures are taken to attract membership applicants from all sections of society and especially from those under-represented in the membership.
- Contracts and volunteer opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities, professional experience and personal merit.
- Selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate against any applicant.
- Where appropriate and necessary, lawful exemption (genuine occupational requirements) may be used to recruit suitable personnel to meet the needs of particular groups.

3.1 Meeting individual needs of members

The NVN is committed to fair and equal treatment for all and will, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity. We will strive to ensure that all members of the Network:

- are able to access NVN members' programmes in ways that suit them;
- are given the opportunity to be involved in NVN activities;
- are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination.

The NVN will do its utmost to meet the needs of individuals, for example:

- by recognising and accommodating caring and domestic responsibilities;
- by planning meetings, events and other activities in a way that allows as many members as possible to attend;

- by making reasonable adjustments where necessary to remove barriers and enable individuals to participate and carry out their roles.

4. Artistic Policy

The NVN is committed to meeting the diverse artistic tastes and creative needs of its members and the communities with which they engage. The NVN supports its members in enriching and expanding their cultural experiences while encouraging them to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

When planning and devising the Annual Gathering and other participatory activities, the NVN and its members will take account of the needs of people with disabilities, including mental health challenges, and of those for whom English is not their first language.

5. Implementation

The Network's trustees and other executive post-holders are responsible for the implementation of this policy. All trustees, NVN members and others holding positions of responsibility in the Network are expected to:

- have read and understood this policy;
- ensure that they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements;
- encourage the same standards of conduct among those with whom they work, including choir members and participants in events associated with the NVN name;
- immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

The NVN will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats,
- physical violence,
- shouting or swearing at others,
- persistent rudeness,
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain individuals,
- telling offensive jokes,
- name-calling,
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email, social media or any other format,
- any other form of harassment or victimisation.

6. Complaints

While the NVN encourages its members to resolve misunderstandings and disputes informally wherever possible, it will treat seriously any formal complaint of unlawful discrimination or unacceptable conduct made by a member or third party against a member or functionary of the Network. The NVN administrator will monitor and record any such complaints.

The Trustee Board will take action where appropriate. This may include facilitating a process of arbitration, reparation and/or reconciliation between the parties concerned. In extreme cases which cannot otherwise be resolved, the trustees may invoke the provision in the Constitution for a member in serious breach of the terms of this policy and, by extension the NVN Code of Conduct, to be removed from membership of the Network.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Trustee Board.

Last updated: November 2020